

Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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TAGS: USEGJG

SUBJECT: JOINT WORKING GROUP (EDUCATION AND CULTURE):

AIN SHAMS ENGLISH TEACHING PROJECT

REF: STATE 64867

1. UCLA PROFESSOR CLIFFORD PRATOR MET MAY 1 WITH AMBASSADOR, WITH DCM AND CAO ALSO PRESENT, TO CONVEY HIS IMPRESSIONS REGARDING HIS INQUIRY INTO QUESTION OF SETTING UP AIN SHAMS ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING CENTER. PRATOR HAD SPENT FOUR DAYS AT AIN SHAMS UNIVERSITY, MEETING WITH VARIOUS FACULTY MEMBERS, AS WELL AS WITH JWG CHAIRMAN DR. HASSAN ISMAIL; AIN SHAMS PRESIDENT, DR. MAHLALLAWI; FACULTY OF EDUCATION DEAN AFIFI; AND ENGLISH DEPARTMENT HEAD DR. HELMY.

2. PRATOR'S MAIN IMPRESSION, AFTER THESE DISCUSSIONS INCLUDING PARTICULARLY MEETING WITH "DEMONSTRATOR" INSTRUCTORS IN ENGLISH DEPARTMENT, WAS THAT QUALITY OF ENGLISH TEACHER TRAINING BADLY NEEDED UP-GRADING. AMBASSADOR AGREED AND SAID THAT OUR AWARENESS OF THIS FACT HAD PROMPTED SUGGESTION TO ORGANIZE THIS PROJECT AS PART OF JWG ACTIVITIES. WHEN ASKED HOW HE ENVISIONED PROJECT MIGHT BE DEVELOPED, PRATOR SAID THAT HE FOUND SITUATION "VERY COMPLEX AND VERY CONFUSING". HE WAS IMPRESSED, HOWEVER, WITH INNOVATIVE ATTITUDE OF AIN SHAMS PRESIDENT MAHLALLAWI, WHO, AT INITIAL MEETING, SUGGESTED POSSIBILITY OF PROJECT LEADING TO ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL CENTER OF ENGLISH TEACHER TRAINING. FIRST YEAR'S WORK, HOWEVER, WOULD HAVE TO BE DIRECTED TOWARD PLANNING AND ORGANIZING EFFORT TO REACH THIS GOAL. IN ADDITION, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRATOR FORESAW UCLA PROFESSORS' INITIAL EFFORT MIGHT HAVE TO

INCLUDE SOME DIRECT TEACHER TRAINING AS WELL. IN CONSIDERING SITUATION, PRATOR SAID THAT PROBLEM OF DR. HELMY, WHOSE APPROACH TO LANGUAGE TEACHING WAS CLEARLY CONSERVATIVE, BUT WHOSE UNIQUE QUALITIES WERE NOT ELSEWHERE AVAILABLE IN AIN SHAMS FACULTY, WOULD HAVE TO BE HANDLED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO PERMIT PROJECT TO OPERATE OUTSIDE HIS DIRECT JURISDICTION. PRATOR ADMITTED THAT HE WAS NOT YET ABLE TO SEE CLEAR OUTLINES OF HOW PROJECT MIGHT BE ORGANIZED, BUT AGREED TO TRY TO FORMULATE SOME IDEAS IN DRAFT REPORT HE WOULD PREPARE PRIOR HIS MAY 3 DEPARTURE FROM CAIRO.

3. IN ASSESSING FEASIBILITY OF THIS PROJECT, PRATOR EXHIBITED CONSIDERABLE CONCERN OVER ADMINISTRATIVE AND LOGISTIC ASPECTS, SUCH AS--ON WORKING SIDE--OFFICE SPACE, SUPPLIES, SECRETARIAL ASSISTANCE AND--ON LIVING SIDE--HOUSING, COMMISSARY PRIVILEGES, ENTRY OF HOUSEHOLD EFFECTS AND TRANSPORTATION. HE HINTED STRONGLY THAT, AS PART OF AN EMBASSY PROJECT, UCLA PROFESSORS WOULD BE ABLE TO OBTAIN EMBASSY SUPPORT IN THESE VARIOUS CATEGORIES OR, FAILING THAT, ARRANGEMENTS MIGHT POSSIBLE BE MADE WITH AMERICAN UNIVERSITY CAIRO (AUC) TO TAKE CARE OF THEIR NEEDS.

4. AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT, WHILE WE STRONGLY FAVOR PROJECT, TOO VISIBLE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN AIN SHAMS PROJECT AND EMBASSY SHOULD BE AVOIDED SINCE, GIVEN EXISTING STUDENT ATTITUDES AND FERMENT, THIS ASSOCIATION COULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE TO AIM OF PROJECT. HE NOTED, MOREOVER, THAT EMBASSY'S SMALL ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF IS ALREADY HAVING GREAT DIFFICULTY PROVIDING FOR EMBASSY REQUIREMENTS, PARTICULARLY IN HOUSING. HOWEVER, EMBASSY IS READY TO OFFER SUCH FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE AS IS WITHIN ITS CAPABILITY SUCH AS PROVIDING LEADS IT COMES ACROSS ON POTENTIAL RENTALS AND MAKING FPO AVAILABLE. RE COMMISSARY PRIVILEGES, AMBASSADOR EXPLAINED THAT MINISCULE EMBASSY COMMISSARY WAS HAVING PROBLEMS OBTAINING SUFFICIENT STOCKS TO SUPPLY PRESENT STAFF AND THAT QUESTIONS WERE ALREADY BEING ASKED BY GOE ABOUT COMMISSARY IMPORTS FOR PERSONS NOT ENTITLED TO FREE ENTRY PRIVILEGES. AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT MOST FOODSTUFFS USED IN HIS HOUSEHOLD, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE BOUGHT FROM LOCAL MARKET. IN ANY EVENT, SINCE UCLA PROFESSORS WILL HAVE STATUS OF CONTRACTUAL PERSONNEL, NEEDED COST-OF-LIVING ALLOWANCE SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN NEGOTIATION OF UCLA CONTRACT. RE TRANSPORTATION. IT WAS INDICATED EMBASSY UNABLE TO PROVIDE. INDEED, IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT PROVISION BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MADE FOR UCLA PERSONNEL TO SHIP THEIR PERSONAL CARS AS DO EMBASSY PERSONNEL.

5. AMBASSADOR ALSO SAID THAT EMBASSY ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION WILL PROVIDE INFORMATION REQUESTED BY PRATOR WHERE IT WAS AVAILABLE, SUCH AS COST OF TUITION AT CAIRO AMERICAN COLLEGE, APPROPRIATE HOUSING ALLOWANCE LEVELS, ETC. AMBASSADOR FURTHER SUGGESTED IT MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR ADVANCE MAN TO COME AHEAD OF UCLA GROUP,

IN ORDER TO MAKE START ON DEALING WITH VARIOUS LOGISTIC PROBLEMS OF SETTLING IN CAIRO. HE ALSO AGREED THAT EMBASSY, UPON RETURN OF AUC BUSINESS MANAGER HARRISON FROM US VISIT, WILL EXPLORE WITH HIM POSSIBILITY OF AUC UNDERTAKING SUPPORT OF UCLA GROUP.

6. AS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AT UNIVERSITY, AMBASSADOR STATED HIS VIEW THIS SHOULD BE PROPERLY RESPONSIBILITY OF AIN SHAMS. HE OFFERED EMBASSY ASSISTANCE IN NEGOTIATION WITH AIN SHAMS FOR ADEQUATE SUPPORT IN FORM OF OFFICES, SECRETARIAL ASSISTANCE AND OFFICE SUPPLIED AND EQUIPMENT. HE REQUESTED PRATOR TO LIST IN HIS REPORT ALL THE ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS HE CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL.

7. EMBASSY FEELS THAT PRATOR VISIT HAS BEEN USEFUL IN TERMS OF EXPLORING SITUATION AT AIN SHAMS AND EXPOSING PROBLEMS THAT WILL NEED TO BE DEALT WITH IN CARRYING OUT PROJECT. IT WAS NOT CLEAR WHETHER PRATOR WILL MADE FAVORABLE RECOMMENDATION TO UCLA REGARDING ASSUMPTION OF THIS PROJECT, SINCE HE SEEMS TOTALLY PREOCCUPIED AND OVERWHELMED WITH MATTER ADMINISTRATIVE/ LOGISTIC SUPPORT OF UCLA PERSONNEL. THIS IS IMPORTANT, BUT NUMEROUS AMERICANS COME HERE AND HANDLE IT.

8. EMBASSY WILL PROVIDE FURTHER COMMENT FOLLOWING REVIEW OF PRATOR'S DRAFT REPORT.
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